



# Leisure Learning at the Institute

READING ROOM & LIBRARY  
CAFÉ  
COURSES  
TALKS  
DAY TRIPS  
& MORE

SPRING  
2025

# Based in the heart of Nottingham

The Nottingham Mechanics Institute has been educating and improving the social wellbeing of the people of Nottingham for 187 years.

## Looking to the future

In 2024 The Institute decided to start a series of Leisure Learning courses, run by professional tutors, with the aim of learning and enjoying the topics with old friends and new. The courses were well received and using feedback from several areas we have added new tutors for the courses in 2025.

The institute welcomes input from visitors on courses they would like to see in the future.

Please have a look around our site if you're stuck on anything

Give us a ring on 01159417353  
or email us from our contact page

Better still pop in and have a chat in person we are here to help.



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# ENROLMENT DATE

## From Monday 17th March

Booking a course

Please fill in an enquiry form online, visit us, or  
phone us on 01159417353.

**But you start booking right away**

To see all our courses and other information,  
please visit

[www.nottmleisurelearning.com](http://www.nottmleisurelearning.com)

If you wish to pay by cheque, please make cheques  
payable to New Mechanics Ltd  
with your name and chosen course details included  
on the reverse.

In person: Nottingham Mechanics Institute

3 North Sherwood St NG1 4EZ

Bookings taken

Mon-Fri, 8.30 AM-2.30 PM

Terms & Conditions for course and event booking, which include our policy on cancellations and refunds are available on our website. Please ask at Reception if you require a paper copy.



# Leisure Learning at the Institute

## DAY PROGRAMME

### History

Myth, Mystery & Mayhem - Richard III, The Princes in the Tower & Bosworth.

Thursdays 10.30-12.30

Starts 1st May

(Dr Mark Barnard)

4-week course £36.00

Last seen in July 1483 after being lodged in the Tower by their paternal uncle and regent the future Richard III, the fate of the Princes in the Tower – the deposed twelve year-old king Edward V of England and his younger brother, Richard of Duke of York – has been a mystery.

It is generally assumed that they were murdered, but were they really killed and by who? Posterity held Shakespeare's "poisonous hunchbacked toad", Richard III, was responsible. Join Dr Mark Barnard to discover just how 'misshapen' and 'wicked' Richard III really was along with what led to his death at Bosworth.



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# Leisure Learning

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### DAY PROGRAMME

### History

Discovering Victorian Nottingham.

Thursdays 10.30-12.30pm

Starts 22nd May

(Chris Weir)

4-week course £36.00

During Victorian times Nottingham grew into a major industrial city. It became famous for its hosiery and lace industries but it also became known for its back-to-back houses in Narrow and Broad Marsh. Overcrowded parts of the city suffered from poor sanitation, ill-health and disease. Local history author and tutor Chris Weir uses maps, period photographs and other historical sources to explore how and why Nottingham changed in Victorian times. The course will also explore some key personalities of the time and how inner suburbs like The Park and Forest Fields changed from open spaces into urban communities.



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# Leisure Learning at the Institute

## DAY PROGRAMME

### History

History of the Music Hall and The Artists who  
Performed There!

Wednesdays 10.30-12.30

Starts 7th May

(Bob Massey)

4 week course £36.00

We will look at how the music hall came about through words music and film. It's development from the pubs of the 1830s to the thousands of buildings around the UK. How it also sprung from a working class entertainment to the sophisticated variety theatres like the Nottingham Empire. It's sad decline and moving to the working men's and socials clubs in the 1970s will also be covered. It survives today via its final return to it's origins the pub in the 1990s and beyond.



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# Leisure Learning at the Institute

## DAY PROGRAMME

### History

Nottingham Rebels – The story of the Luddites, Chartists,  
Bread Riots & Others!

Wednesdays 2–4pm

Starts 7th May

(Bob Massey)

4-week course £36.00

Nottingham people have not taken to the rule of authority easily. They have always been ready to speak their minds and take to the streets if their grievances have not been met. We will be looking at some local protests large and small that have taken place through out the centuries, in and a round the city. We will see how the authorities reacted and how did the people responded as well as what were the long and short term outcomes of these protests. We will see how they still affect us today



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# Leisure Learning at the Institute

## DAY PROGRAMME

### History

Great Artists You May Never Have Heard Of!

Tuesdays 10.15-12.15

Starts 13th May

(David Price)

9 week course £81.00

This course will examine the paintings of a variety of artists who are largely unknown today, despite producing high quality work.

They come from several countries in Europe and some of the painted works were much admired by their contemporaries and they are often still in their own countries. Some of those contemporaries were also ignored for many years and have been rediscovered, so the artists we'll be looking at may one day be brought back into mainstream consciousness. We'll also look at some American artists from the turn of the Twentieth century until more recent years who deserve to be known better, and painters from "unfashionable" countries in Europe (as far as the art world is concerned) - Ireland, Scandinavia and Slavonic Countries...



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# Leisure Learning at the Institute

## DAY PROGRAMME

### History

Musicals: Strife, Low lifeand High Society

Wednesdays 10.15-12.15

Starts 21st May

(David Price)

10 week course £90.00

A look at history through musicals, including Fiddler on the Roof, Guys and Dolls, Chicago, Singin in the Rain, Gypsy, Miss Saigon and others. Also covered will be musicals focused on the history behind industrial issues - there are a surprising number of these! We'll examine political, cultural and social issues that form the basis of the plots and how the historical contexts in which they were written have often affected views of history portrayed in the shows themselves. We will also consider in particular the life and career of Cole Porter, whose background and lifestyle contrasted markedly with those of the mainly Jewish composers and writers behind some of the best known musicals.  
With Film clips and musical extracts.



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# Leisure Learning

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### DAY PROGRAMME

## History

Britain In Ireland –

From the Act of Union to the Irish Free State

Fridays 10.15-12.15pm

Starts 16th May

(David Price)

8 week course £72.00

The Act of Union passed by the British parliament in January 1801 was intended to solve “ the Irish question” once and for all but failed, largely because of British backtracking on promises of Catholic emancipation. We’ll look at the context of Anglo-Norman, English and British attempts to subjugate Ireland in previous centuries and how close some rebellions in Ireland came to overthrowing English/British control. We’ll also look at events in the 19th Century following the enactment of the Act of Union, particularly Daniel O’Connell’s campaign to achieve Catholic representation at Westminster; the rise of revolutionary groups during and after the Great Famine, which hardened attitudes in Ireland because of the British response to it; Gladstone’s plans for home rule; and the growth of peaceful Irish nationalism and a revival of Irish culture at the turn of the 20th Century. We’ll see how British reaction to the Easter Rising of 1916 ended support in Ireland for Home Rule and the war of Independence followed. The treaty to end this war, the result of a meeting in London between the British government and Irish representatives, led to the Irish civil war, tearing communities and families apart. We’ll see how Eamon de Valera, one of the main opponents of the Treaty, eventually came to dominate Irish politics and oversaw the adoption of a new constitution in 1937, effectively creating an Irish republic and largely bringing an end to British involvement in Southern Ireland.



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# Leisure Learning at the Institute

## DAY PROGRAMME

### History

Vietnam War  
Mondays 1-3pm  
Starts 2nd June  
(David Halliwell)  
8 week course £72.00

This course delves into the complex history of the Vietnam War, examining the roots of the conflict in French colonialism, the rise of Ho Chi Minh's communist movement, and the escalating US involvement during the Cold War; exploring key battles, political decision-making, the impact on Vietnamese civilians, the domestic anti-war movement in America, and the lasting consequences of the war on both Vietnam and the international stage."



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# Leisure Learning at the Institute

## DAY PROGRAMME

### Languages & Culture

Japanese Culture & Life

Fridays 10:30-12pm

Starts 9th May

(Takae Gale)

6-week course £54.00

Discover the fascinating world of Japanese culture and language with Takae. From learning basic Japanese phrases, writing (calligraphy), and origami to learning all about the culture, including Japanese tea ceremonies and kimono design. Interested in Japanese culture? Then this is the course for you.



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# Leisure Learning at the Institute

## DAY PROGRAMME

### Creative Writing

Writing for Stage and Screen

Wednesdays 10.00–4.00pm

2nd July & 23rd July

(Michael Eaton)

2 Full Day Course

£90.00

Welcome to our brand new course run over 2 whole days.

1. Writing for Stage and Screen: From inspiration to first draft;
2. Writing for Stage and Screen: From first draft to green light.

Join us for an incredible opportunity to learn from one of Nottingham's most renowned writers, Michael Eaton. With extensive experience in script-writing for stage, screen, and radio, his two-day courses are a must for anyone looking to enhance their writing skills. Throughout the sessions, you'll explore transforming ideas into compelling stories, developing character arcs, and crafting your first draft. Michael will guide you in refining your work to ensure it shines as a finished piece.

Don't miss out on this chance to elevate your writing!



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# Leisure Learning at the Institute DAY PROGRAMME Literature

‘The Turn of the Screw’ – a gothic novella by Henry James  
Wednesdays 10.30–12.30 pm  
Starts 30th April  
(Judith Hedley)  
5-week course £45.00

Who is the governess narrator of this strange tale? What’s happening to the seemingly angelic children left in her charge, and how can we tell where reality ends and an uncanny world of the supernatural begins? Reading this late nineteenth century story will lead us to explore the mind of Henry James himself, the role of governesses in fact and fiction, the transformation of the gothic genre and – since this is Leisure Learning – any related topics you might want to raise. Animated discussion is virtually guaranteed.

You will need to bring a copy of ‘The Turn of the Screw’ – any edition.



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# Leisure Learning at the Institute

## DAY PROGRAMME

### Literature

Poetry: A 20th Century Menu Continued

Wednesdays 1.30-3.00pm

Starts 30th April

(Judith Hedley)

5 week course £45.00

This five week course continues where last term left off, but extends a welcome to new faces and new voices as we explore poets from 1900 to the present day, chosen by popular vote. So far we have looked at Philip Larkin, Simon Armitage, Sylvia Plath, Clive James, W B Yeats, D H Lawrence and Carol Ann Duffy, and our next choices promise to be just as eclectic. You don't need to be an expert or a dedicated poetry lover to join us, just someone with an open mind who enjoys words, ideas and the company of a friendly group. Poems to be studied will be provided weekly in booklet form.



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# Leisure Learning at the Institute DAY PROGRAMME Literature

Tales from the Rails  
Tuesdays 10.30-12.30pm  
Starts 22nd April  
(Dr John Florance)  
3 week course £27.00

The invention of the steam powered locomotive and the very rapid development of the railway network resulted in huge social changes.

For example, the opening up of seaside resorts and the rapid transport of goods and raw materials to and from the growing industrial cities. It also created an entirely new way of looking at the passing scene. The swiftness of trains caused passengers to see the world in a series of glimpses, something reflected in art and prose. In this course we shall look at a number of poems, books and descriptive writings which reflect the changes wrought by the railway and the effect it had on our vision of the country.

No previous knowledge is needed.



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# Leisure Learning

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### DAY PROGRAMME

#### Literature

More George Orwell's Essays

Tuesdays 1.30-3.30pm

Starts 29th April

(13th May is a Holiday week)

(Dr John Florance)

5-week course £45.00

George Orwell is best known for his prophetic novel Nineteen Eight-Four but his compelling expressed and provoked essays deserve to be better known. In this course we will discuss about ten of his essays most of which can be found in the Oxford Classics edition of Orwell's Selected Essays. All can be found on-line. Details of which essays to read will be supplied well in advance so that you can mull them over before we meet. The course will encourage open and free discussion and no previous knowledge is needed.



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# Leisure Learning at the Institute

## DAY PROGRAMME Literature

What they didn't tell you about Shakespeare at School

Tuesdays 10.30-12.30pm

Starts 20th May

(Dr John Florance)

3 week course £27.00

Shakespeare divides people. Many think he is boring and incomprehensible, others think he is exciting and incomparable. Whatever Category you fall into (there are others) you will come away with ideas and information which will enrich your sense of Shakespeare and help make him very enjoyable.

We will look at such questions as:

How did Shakespeare's playhouse affect the plays written for it and the way the players acted?

What did Shakespeare's English sound like?

Where did he find his plots?

What do we know about his life?

When and why did Shakespeare become our national poet?

Who down the years have been the great Shakespeare actors and how did they present his characters?

...and much more! No previous knowledge is needed!



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# Leisure Learning at the Institute

## DAY PROGRAMME

### Music

Concerts in Focus

Mondays 10.15-12.15pm

Starts 28th April

5th & 26th May are weeks off due to Bank Holidays

(Mike Wheeler)

6 week course £54.00

Join us for a thorough journey into the realm of concerts. We will delve into everything from the history of live music performances to the newest trends in concert production. Prepare to uncover the enchantment of live music and the memorable experiences that can only be found at a concert.



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# Leisure Learning at the Institute DAY PROGRAMME

## Philosophy & Politics

Mondays 2.30–4.30pm

Starts 12th May

26th May is a Holiday

(Bettina Lange)

8 week course £72.00

There is increasing concern that democracy is 'in crisis' in Europe and beyond. In this course Philosophy, Psychology and Political Science will be used to identify risks and indicate constructive responses to them.

The course will cover : 1. the meaning of 'crisis' 2. what is in crisis – a short overview of different interpretations of 'democracy' 3. evidence of distrust in politicians and the democratic political system 4. who engages with politics, who does not and what kind of politics do they participate in (from parliamentary democracy to protest actions) 5. authoritarian attitudes and how best to respond to them (especially Karen Stenner's work) 6. the relationship between conspiracy theories and democracy.



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# Nottingham Mechanics Institute

## Members Interest Groups

- Small Informal Groups for you to come along and join in: (small charges applicable on some clubs)
- Film Afternoon: Mondays 1.30 pm
- Gardening Club: Tuesdays Fortnightly 10.00-12.00  
(George Hallam)
- Stitch Club: Mondays Fortnightly 1.30-3.30 pm  
(Clare Orger)
- Games Afternoon: Tuesdays 1.00-3.30 pm
- Music Opera Events with Robert: Fortnightly 10.30  
am
- Short Mat Bowls: Thursdays 1.30 pm
- Table Tennis: Fridays 1.30 pm
- Curtius Salon Talks: Fridays 11 am

These are members groups. Please see  
Wes or Ruth regarding this or  
membership to Nottingham Mechanics  
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SPECIAL DAY TALKS  
GUIDED WALKS  
NEW COURSES  
VARIOUS TRIPS

SUMMER  
2025



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